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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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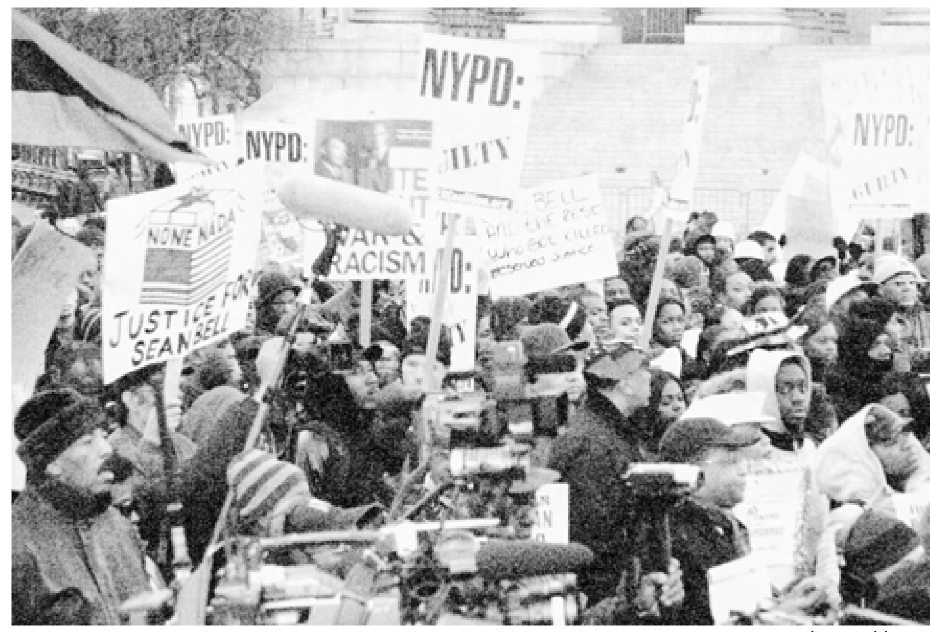
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1,000 in New York protest killing by cops

City officials, police try to defuse outrage



Militant/Eddie Beck

Protesters at Foley Square in New York rally December 6 to demand 'Justice for Sean Bell,' the Black worker killed by the police November 26 in a hail of 50 bullets.

BY ROSS HOGAN AND EMILY PAUL

NEW YORK, December 6—One thousand people rallied in Foley Square here tonight to demand justice in response to the November 26 police shooting of three young African Americans that left one dead and two wounded.

City officials and other big-business politicians have sought to defuse the widespread anger at the cops with promises of a "fair investigation." The police have tried to deflect blame with unsubstantiated claims that the victims of the shooting were linked to weapons and drug peddling.

Nearly 1,000 people turned out for the December 1 funeral of Sean Bell. The 23-year-old worker was killed in a barrage of 50 police bullets in the early morning hours of November 26. His friends Joseph Guzman, 31, and Trent Benefield, 23, received multiple gunshot wounds and were hospitalized. Five undercover cops opened fire on the three as they left a club in Jamaica, Queens, where they had attended Bell's bachelor party on the eve of his wedding.

While the police claim they thought one of the men was armed, the only weapons and bullets found on the scene were those of the cops who fired on the three men as they sat inside Bell's car. The five police agents have been put on administrative duty. Queens district attorney Richard Brown has given no timetable for when the grand jury will be convened.

The day after the funeral about 350 people rallied at the scene of the shooting. They marched to the 103rd police

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Canadian Chinese call for redress over head tax

BY STEVE PENNER AND NED DMYTRYSHYN

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Chanting, "Head tax redress, justice now!" more than 300 people voted at a November 25 meeting to demand compensation for every one of the 82,000 Chinese-Canadian families forced to pay a head tax last century. Many of those attending the event at the Chinese Cultural Center in Chinatown were in their 70s and 80s.

The Canadian government imposed the racist head tax on all Chinese immigrants to this country between 1885 and 1923. Initially $50, it was raised to $100, then $500 in 1903, the equivalent of two years' pay for a laborer.

Frank Chan told the *Militant*, "People had to work for 10 to 15 years to pay off" the money they had borrowed to pay the tax. "If they died, their family in China was still stuck with the bur-

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Day laborers in N.Y. win antibias case

BY RÓGER CALERO

MAMARONECK, New York, December 5—A federal judge ruled November 20 that town officials here discriminated against day laborers who congregated to look for work through a systematic campaign of intimidation and harassment.

"Since August 2004, and continuing into this past summer, the defendants have engaged in a campaign designed to drive out the Latino day laborers who gather on the streets of Mamaroneck to seek work," said federal Judge Colleen McMahon in her ruling. "The fact that the day laborers were Latinos, and not whites, was, at least in part, a motivating factor in defendants' actions."

The November 20 decision came after a discrimination lawsuit was filed last April on behalf of six day laborers and the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, with the support of the Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund,

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San Francisco Chinatown event discusses book on Cuban Revolution

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN FRANCISCO—The meeting room at the Public Library in San Francisco's Chinatown was standing-room only December 2 for a panel discussion on the book *Our History Is Still Being Written, the Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*.

The library, which sponsored the meeting, is one of the busiest in San Francisco and a longtime center of cultural activity and exchange of ideas in Chinatown. It has a large collection of books in Chinese.

The library staff publicized the meeting with flyers in English and Chinese. Several young people in the audience had learned of the event from leaflets distributed outside the library, or from an announcement over the library loudspeaker just before the program began. The entire meeting, attended by 75 people, was translated into both Cantonese and Spanish.

Chinatown librarian Sally Wong chaired the meeting and introduced panelists Bernard Wong, a professor of anthropology at San Francisco State University; documentary filmmaker Felicia Lowe; James Hirabayashi, chief program advisor for the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles and former dean of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State; Milton Chee, a rail worker who helps produce and distribute Pathfinder Press titles; and Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder and editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written*.

Lowe and Bernard Wong had both participated in a 1999 international conference on the Chinese diaspora held in Havana, Cuba. Hirabayashi had visited Cuba in 2000 for a festival in Santiago de Cuba focusing on African influence in the Caribbean. All three described how their visits had helped awaken them to

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Students march in Washington to defend school desegregation

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Some 1,500 students from college campuses and high schools across the East Coast rallied here December 4 as the Supreme Court heard challenges to public school desegregation plans in Louisville, Kentucky, and Seattle.

In June the court announced it would hear the cases even though they had been upheld by three federal appeals courts since 2003. The Bush administration filed a brief backing challenges to the plans.

One of the demonstrators' most popular chants was "*Brown* won us rights! But we still got to fight!" The doctrine of "separate but equal," codifying racist segregation of public facilities, was overturned in the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court de-

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U.S. rulers debate how best to establish stable regime in Iraq

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, December 6—Robert Gates, the Bush administration's nominee to replace Donald Rumsfeld as U.S. secretary of defense, was confirmed here today by the Senate in a 95–2 vote. Gates, a former CIA chief, received praise from both Democratic and Republican senators.

In response to a question about the Iraq Study Group report that was released today, Gates told a Senate confirmation committee the day before, "Frankly there are no new ideas on Iraq."

Gates indicated that large numbers of U.S. troops would need to stay in Iraq for years to come. "My greatest worry if we mishandle the next year or two and if we leave Iraq in chaos is that a variety of regional powers will become involved in Iraq, and we will have a regional conflict," he said.

Just a few days earlier at a meeting in Amman, Jordan, with Iraqi government leaders, U.S. president George Bush reiterated that Washington will continue to press its war in Iraq. Bush's remarks came amid an ongoing debate

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Also Inside:

Goodyear strikers stand up against takeback demands

BY JOHN STEELE

COLLINGWOOD, Ontario—"The company can only hold out so long without affecting the bottom line: the shareholders," Goodyear striker Robbie McKee told the *Militant* November 25 on the picket line here.

McKee is one of more than 200 workers on strike at this plant, which produces rubber hoses for the auto assembly industry. A total of 15,000 workers in Canada and the United States are on the picket lines to defend their union, the United Steelworkers (USW), against a union-busting drive by the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. In Canada they include 1,000 workers at several unionized plants in Ontario and one in Alberta.

The bosses are demanding wage cuts of up to 40 percent, elimination of retiree medical benefits, and the closure of two plants in Texas and Alabama affecting thousands of workers and their families. In a number of areas the company is attempting to maintain production using management personnel, temporary workers bused in by security thugs, and some union members who have crossed the picket lines.

Strikers here said only a few trucks were hauling out finished goods. In an indication of the strike's impact on the multimillion-dollar company, a recent statement by analysts at Deutsche Bank reported that Goodyear is "currently producing at 40 percent of their pre-strike capacity (10 percent at union plants and 100 percent at nonunion plants)."

Picket lines remain firm, but in some areas the unionists have faced cop harassment and provocations by linecrossers. Here strikers report that the company is bringing in workers from Goodyear's nonunion plant in Valleyfield, Quebec, as well as temporary workers.

At the Toronto warehouse and retread facility, where there are 60 strikers, cops arrested a picket line captain November 22. He was released on bail after a Goodyear manager laid criminal harassment charges on him. At the plant in Tyler, Texas, USW member Kenneth Robbins was released from the hospital with a severely sprained shoulder after he was struck by the side view mirror of a scab-driven car, the union reported. The driver then threatened to run over the other pickets.

Michel Prairie and Joe Young contributed to this article.

Australia protesters demand prosecution of cop responsible for death of Aborigine



Militant/Bob Aiken

BRISBANE, Australia—Some 250 people joined a spirited march through the downtown of this city November 18 to demand that the police who killed Mulrunji Doomadgee be prosecuted. Mulrunji, an Aborigine, was beaten to death on Nov. 19, 2004, while in police custody on Palm Island, off the northern Queensland coast. A coroner's report released September 27 ruled that Queensland cop Christopher Hurley was responsible for the death. Mulrunji's cousin, Alec Doomadgee (above, in dark glasses), spoke at a rally before the march, demanding that Hurley be "brought before the court." He called on other young Aborigines to "stand up" in the fight against police brutality.

—BOB AIKEN

Vancouver meeting demands compensation for head tax imposed on Chinese immigrants

Continued from front page

den of paying the money back."

In 1923 the Canadian government imposed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which banned all immigration from China and remained in effect until 1947. As a result, many of those who paid the head tax, almost all men, were separated from their wives and children for decades. Chinese-Canadians were also denied the right to vote and faced many other racist laws and practices.

In June of this year, after a decades-long fight for justice by Chinese-Canadians, Ottawa agreed to compensate about 400 surviving head tax payers and their spouses. The Head Tax Families Society of Canada (HTFS), which organized the November 25 meeting, noted that a bare 0.6 percent of families subjected to the head tax will be compensated.

Wayne Lee, an activist in the HTFS, said that the redress fight is "important for today because it strengthens other struggles for justice."

Another activist, Ron Mah, said winning redress has been a deeply felt issue for different generations of Chinese-Canadian families. "I remember how as a boy our family always talked about the need to pursue justice and how unfair the head tax was," he said.

Vancouver city councilor David Cadman, who spoke at the meeting, said, "Many people say this happened a long time ago. But today in our society there are people who are still being discriminated against."

Several members of Parliament spoke, including New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jack Layton and former Liberal cabinet minister Ujjal Donsanjh. Layton said the NDP supports the HTFS demands.

Sid Tan, a co-chair of the HTFS vowed, "We're building a movement of such strength" that it will "outlast the [Prime Minister Stephen] Harper government and any other government" until justice is achieved.

Grace Schenkeveld, English-language spokesperson for the HTFS, presented Layton with 1,600 letters from descendants of head tax payers and a petition demanding redress to be introduced in Parliament.

Dozens lined up to join the HTFS during the meeting.



November 29 walkout at Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn to protest the police killing of Sean Bell in Queens three days before.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

Atlanta cop killing of elderly Black woman in her home sparks protest

BY BILL ARTH

ATLANTA—More than 300 people filled the Lindsay Street Baptist Church November 28 for a community meeting to protest the fatal shooting of Kathryn Johnston by city police. Johnston, a Black woman who lived alone and according to relatives was 92 years old, was killed during a November 21 cop raid on her house in a hail of bullets. None of the cops have been arrested.

The drug squad cops stormed Johnston's home using a "no knock" search warrant. They burst through her burglar bars and knocked down her security door. Police say Johnston met them at the door with a revolver, which her niece gave to her for self-protection, and wounded three cops, none seriously.

A judge granted the warrant based on an affidavit signed by narcotics officer Jason Smith, who claimed that earlier on November 21 a police informer had purchased cocaine at the house from a man named "Sam," and that "Sam" had installed surveillance cameras at the house to protect against a raid.

The informer, Alexis White, later came forward in a TV interview to say the police had called him after the shooting and instructed him to lie about his role in order to cover up for them. White said the cops told him, "You need to cover our [rear]…. It's all on you, man…. You need to tell them about this Sam dude."

White said he was never at Johnston's house and that "Sam" is a fabrication of the cops.

Police also made other contradictory claims. First they said an undercover cop made the alleged drug purchase; later they said an informer did it. Originally they claimed to have found narcotics in the raid; later they said they found a small amount of marijuana, not considered a narcotic by police.

At the funeral for Johnston, attended by 100 people, Vera Washington, her sister-in-law, said she suspected the cops "were lying all the time. A woman that age would not be selling drugs."

Eight police officers have been placed on paid administrative leave. Authorities have yet to report how many shots the cops fired because it's all "under investigation."



Militant/Maceo Dixon

November 28 meeting at the Lindsay Street Baptist Church in Atlanta to protest the killing of Kathryn Johnston, gunned down by cops who raided her home.

The November 28 community meeting was called by State Senator Vincent Fort and State Representative Mable Thomas. It was attended by numerous local and state Democratic Party politicians who are Black, including Atlanta mayor Shirley Franklin. Police chief Richard Pennington faced four hours of questions at the meeting from community residents angered by the killing. The FBI and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation have also said they are investigating the case.

Some local residents questioned Pennington about what they said was the participation of cops in the drug trade in the community. Others expressed doubts that Johnston could have shot three cops, suggesting that they wounded themselves in their own barrage of gunfire. One said he feared the cops more than the drug dealers in his neighborhood.

Neither Mayor Franklin nor any of the other officeholders present at the community called for prosecuting the cops who killed Johnston.

A rally of 100 people took place in front of Johnston's house before the community meeting. Among the signs at the rally, which was called by the New Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, was one with a picture of a cop on the phone with the caption, "They gave me administrative leave…with pay. Kill a Black citizen and get paid."

On December 4 nearly 500 people attended a "town hall meeting" at the Mount Ephraim Baptist Church, called by the Atlanta branch of the NAACP, to discuss the killing of Kathryn Johnston. Franklin, Pennington, and other city and state officials were part of the panel, which responded to written questions.

Questioners demanded answers about the shooting of Johnston, no-knock warrants, and the mistreatment of Blacks by the cops. One person attending the meeting, Willie Zellers, said his son Aubrey, 21, was beaten so severely by Atlanta police October 11, when he was stopped for a traffic violation and attempted to run away, that he died that night. Pennington replied that the case was in the hands of the district attorney and he couldn't comment.

Chávez reelected Venezuela president

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez won reelection December 3 to another six-year term. The country's National Electoral Council declared him winner with nearly 63 percent of the vote, or 7.2 million ballots out of about 12 million cast. Turnout was about 75 percent.

His opponent, Manual Rosales, was backed by a coalition of pro-imperialist parties. He conceded and did not claim electoral fraud, as the opposition has done in previous elections.

U.S. ambassador William Brownfield tried to sound a conciliatory tone. "The president was reelected by the decision of the Venezuelan people," he told the media. "We're ready, willing, and eager to explore and see if we can make progress on bilateral issues."

"I doubt the U.S. government is sincere," Chávez responded. "They want dialogue but on the condition that you accept their positions."

U.S. officials have repeatedly accused Venezuela's government of "destabilizing" the region and being a "negative force" in Latin America. Washington backed a military coup against Chávez in April 2002, a bosses' lockout at the end of that year, and a drive by the pro-imperialist opposition to oust the president through a recall referendum in 2004. Each of these efforts failed in face of outpourings of popular support for the elected government.

Since taking office in 1998, the Chávez government has angered many Venezuelan capitalists by passing a series of laws, including an agrarian reform

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Venezuela forum: Free five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in U.S.



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

November 19 forum on Cuban Five at Venezuela International Book Fair in Caracas. Speaking, third from left on the panel, is Magalys Llort, mother of Fernando González, one of five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and imprisoned in the United States.

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS AND EMILY PAUL

CARACAS, Venezuela, November 19—More than 200 people gathered here for an event promoting the international campaign to free five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in the United States. It was held today at the José Martí hall in Parque del Este (Eastern Park), site of Venezuela's Second International Book Fair. The largest meeting of the fair, it took place on the closing day of the book festival's 11-day portion in this capital city.

The Cuban Five, as they are known—Fernando González, René González, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, and Ramón Labañino—have been locked up since their arrests in Florida in 1998. They are serving draconian sentences, ranging from 15 years to a double life term, after being convicted by a federal court in Miami in 2001 on charges that include "conspiracy to commit espionage" for the Cuban government and other trumped-up accusations. Hernández was also convicted of "conspiracy to commit murder" and given two consecutive life sentences.

"The five heroes risked their lives and, without weapons and nothing more than their hearts, obtained information about terrorist attacks against Cuba in order to defend their country's sovereignty," said featured speaker Magalys Llort, mother of Fernando González. She said the five had entered rightist Cuban-American groups with a record of violent attacks on Cuba, carried out from Florida with Washington's complicity, and that the prosecutors produced no evidence to prove their charges of "spying against the United States."

Llort noted that on August 9 a U.S. appeals court upheld the convictions of the five, overturning a ruling issued a year earlier by a three-judge panel of the same court. The panel had annulled the convictions and ordered a new trial on the basis that holding it in Miami had prejudiced the jurors. She said the appeal process will continue on other grounds.

"This is a political case," Llort emphasized. "We don't trust the U.S. courts. Only by expanding public support for the international campaign to free them will we be able to open the prison doors so they can return to their country and to those who love them."

Other speakers included Francisco Sesto, Venezuela's minister of culture; Ramón Medero, president of the National Book Institute, which organized the book fair; and Víctor Chirinos, a Venezuelan deputy to the Latin American parliament.

The forum was preceded by a showing of the film *Mission Against Terror,* a documentary by Bernie Dwyer and Roberto Ruiz that tells the story of the Cuban Five.

The event included the presentation of booklets of poems, essays, and drawings by the Cuban Five. These are being used for the campaign to free them and to demand that family members who have been denied U.S. visas be allowed to visit them.

—*MILITANT LABOR FORUMS*—

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Justice for Sean Bell! Jail the Killer Cops! Fri., Dec. 15. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. *168 Bloomfield Ave. (near Clifton Ave.), 2nd Floor. Tel.: (973) 481-0077.*

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Coolies, Sailors, and Settlers. Video on Chinese immigration to the Americas. Fri., Dec. 15. Dinner: 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. *306 W. 37th St., 10th Fl. (use north set of elevators). Tel.: (212) 629-6649.*

TEXAS

Houston

Venezuela, the Cuban Revolution, and the World Today. Speakers: Maggie Trowe and Amanda Ulman, participants in the Venezuela International Book Fair. Sat., Dec. 16. Reception, 4:30 p.m.; program, 5:30 p.m. Program will be followed by a dinner and social. *4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-51A. Tel.: (713) 869-6550.*

Rally for desegregation

Continued from front page

cision. Legal segregation against Blacks was swept away by a two-decades-long social movement of millions known as the civil rights movement.

The largest contingent of the mostly Black students who rallied outside the Supreme Court and at the Lincoln Memorial came from Howard University and several area high schools.

"We're proud of the response we have gotten from Howard students," said Brenda Johnson, a math major. "We have to do this for ourselves and the next generation. Just look at the schools here in the nation's capital and you will see that they are still separate and unequal."

Sean Perry came with a large group from Ballou High School that included members of the school's marching band. He said the school lacked enough books, computers, and science equipment. "The place needs painting. Lots of windows are still broken and it's starting to get cold. They need more teachers. Sometimes you don't know who will be the teacher, or if there will be one," Perry said.

This was Perry's first demonstration. "This gives us a chance to show that we're aware of what's going on and that if we're given the opportunity we can fight for our rights," he said. "We are not the lost generation."

In 1973 a federal court found the Louisville school system to be segregated. That led to court-ordered busing in that area from 1975 to 1984. The system remained under court supervision until 2000. Today the 97,000-student school system in Louisville is 34 percent Black, the rest predominantly white.

The plan facing legal challenge aims to obtain between 15 percent and 50 percent Black student enrollment in each school with the exception of pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and some "magnet" schools. Crystal Meredith, a white parent who sued the Louisville school board, says the plan kept her son out of a school in his neighborhood.

In 1977 the Seattle school board began voluntary busing in the 47,000-student system to achieve greater integration but ended the program in 1988. An "Open Choice" plan, begun in 1998, aims to establish student ratios in each school that are close to the overall composition in Seattle—60 percent oppressed minorities and 40 percent white. It allows students to attend any school of their choice. Where demand exceeds available seats, siblings of current students are given priority. In other cases an "integration tiebreaker" favors students whose race tips a school toward the 60-40 ratio.



Militant/Glova Scott

Students from Fayetteville State University in North Carolina join December 4 rally of 1,500 in Washington to oppose challenges to school desegregation.

Many students at the December 4 rally drew a connection between the challenges to public school desegregation and recent attacks on affirmative action.

"We are from historically Black colleges and universities," said Keith Jones, 21, a political science major at Morehouse College in Atlanta, which sent three busloads. "Many of us will want to do our graduate work at schools like the University of Michigan or the University of California. Opponents of affirmative action are trying to shut the door on us. We are here today to say that won't happen," he said.

"For me this is a continuation of the struggle when millions took to the streets to fight for immigrant rights," said Issamar Camacho, addressing the rally at the Lincoln Memorial.

Camacho, a student at Roosevelt High School in Los Angeles, referred to the large demonstrations in April and May for the legalization of undocumented immigrants. "We walked out of school all over the city of Los Angeles. We stood up to say we are not illegal, we are human beings, and we will fight for our rights." she said to loud applause and cheers.

The march and rally was organized by the By Any Means Necessary Coalition, which organized a 2003 rally of 75,000 at the Supreme Court in response the challenges to affirmative action admissions at the universities of Michigan and Ohio.

Students carried banners and placards or wore emblems from several historically Black colleges. Among them were Morehouse, Clark, and Spelman in Atlanta; North Carolina A&T and Fayetteville State University in North Carolina; Hampton University in Virginia; Tennessee State; and Morgan State and Bowie State in nearby Maryland.

Groups of high school youth came from Detroit along with students from the University of Michigan. A busload came from Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Day laborers in New York win victory

Continued from front page

against the Village of Mamaroneck, its mayor, Phillip Trifiletti, and local chief of police Edward Flynn. The lawsuit requested an injunction against what the plaintiffs called selective law enforcement and discrimination.

"They were discriminating against us," Mario Martínez, 45, a resident of Mamaroneck who works as a painter, told the *Militant* today while waiting for work at a gas station on Mamaroneck Avenue. "They were trying to drive us out of here. We never did what they were accusing us of. We are here trying to get work."

Martínez was referring to a campaign led by the mayor and other town officials, allegedly in response to an upswing in complaints by residents that day laborers, who gathered for work at a site on Van Ranst Place along Columbus Park, downgraded their "quality of life." These residents supposedly complained that the workers engaged in "prostitution, drug dealing, public intoxication, child molestation, public exposures, and littering," and it felt unsafe to visit the park while the day laborers were there.

In August 2004 town officials closed down the site on Van Ranst Place. The workers were directed instead to a nearby parking lot. There they were under constant surveillance by the cops, who harassed contractors and others stopping by to pick up workers.

Cop harassment continued at the new site, until its use was prohibited too. In April, town officials posted signs at the parking lot and passed out flyers informing day laborers they could no longer wait for jobs there, forcing them onto nearby streets.

"Every day, the same racist cop on a bicycle used to come where we stand, and stare at us with his sunglasses on and tell us that we had to move," or face arrests and fines, said Martínez. "Sometimes he would place his hand on his gun."

The cops also set up checkpoints at either end of Mamaroneck Avenue to stop commercial vehicles and "inspect" them for no reason other than intimidating contractors.

"The cops came and gave fines for nothing," Luis Pérez, 24, another day laborer, told the *Militant*.

Several workers said cops on bicycles had still come by recently. A police car stopped while this reporter was interviewing a group of day laborers and told them they had to move because the gas station owner had supposedly complained. After moving to the sidewalk, workers said the owner had never objected to their presence there before and allowed them to use the bathroom and to come into the store to warm up and buy coffee.

Many of these workers said the victory in the lawsuit was an important step in their fight to defend their right to look for work, and in the broader efforts to push back attacks on immigrant workers.

"We are still here because we did something, and we were not intimidated," said Pérez. "If we had done nothing we would not be here."

"We now hope to be able to start a hiring hall," said Misael López, who has been coming here for work for the last three years. "It will be a little difficult because not everyone is going to accept that. There are some people who are racist, but there are others with more heart and solidarity."

President of Nicaragua signs abortion ban into law

BY RÓGER CALERO

On November 17 outgoing Nicaraguan president Enrique Bolaños signed a bill, backed by president-elect Daniel Ortega, that prohibits all abortions.

Women who undergo the operation and anyone who aids them can be jailed up to six years.

The National Assembly had approved the measure October 26, shortly before the presidential elections, with the overwhelming support of both major parties, the Liberal Alliance and Ortega's Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). It was backed by three of the four main presidential candidates.

Abortion was already illegal in Nicaragua before the new law, but an abortion was permitted if three doctors certified that the pregnant woman's life would be in danger or in case of rape or incest, and only if the woman obtained the consent of her spouse or other close relative.

Women's rights supporters in Nicaragua have staged protests and other events protesting the ban. The new law has been condemned by women's rights organizations and medical associations both in Nicaragua and abroad.

"It is a crime against poorer women and an open violation to universal human rights and the Constitution," said Dr. Ana María Pizarro of the Nicaraguan Society of Gynecologists and Obstetricians.

Bolaños signed the bill into law despite his previous demand that it include much stiffer prison sentences—up to 30 years—for women undergoing an abortion and anyone helping them.

Two years ago Bolaños's party, the Constitutional Liberals, sought to increase the sentence for abortions—which at that time was one to three years in prison—to 20 years. FSLN legislators proposed an eight-year sentence.

The Nicaraguan daily *La Prensa* reported November 4 on what appeared to be the first known case of a death resulting from the new legislation. Two days earlier a pregnant woman, Jazmina Bojorge Rodríguez, 18, who had been admitted to a Managua hospital with high fever, died after being denied treatment she pleaded for.

Even a day after it was determined that the fetus had died in her uterus, doctors refused to remove it. "According to discussions with the doctors, there was fear about operating sooner, because they were afraid they would be penalized for performing a therapeutic abortion," Pizarro told *La Prensa*. In addition, the facility lacked ultrasound equipment and Bojorge had to be transferred to another hospital, where she died.

Chávez reelected

Continued from page 3

law, measures allowing for greater state control of the country's oil resources, and steps to improve ties with Cuba. Encouraged by these openings, workers and peasants have fought for land, jobs, and more democratic rights. These struggles have alarmed many among the national bourgeoisie and its U.S. backers.

Much of the media coverage of the recent vote highlighted post-election statements by Chávez that he will deepen his government's "socialism of the 21st century."

For the most part, however, the U.S. big-business press has not appeared very worried. "This is hardly the first time Chávez has boisterously threatened further radicalization of his revolution, and Venezuela is still far from the Latin American Marxist nightmare that Washington fears it will become," said an article in the December 5 online edition of *Time* magazine.

ON THE PICKET LINE



AP

Coal miners wait for news of their coworkers after a gas explosion at mine in Fuyuan, China. At least 32 were killed in the blast, one of three at separate sites November 25–26.

China: dozens of miners killed in three mine explosions

At least 77 coal miners were killed in gas explosions at three mines in northern China November 25–26, the Chinese news agency Xinhua reported.

All 24 miners working in the shaft in the Luweitan Coal Mine in Linfen, Shanxi province, were killed after an accumulation of gas there ignited during a power outage, according to *Mining Journal*, published in the United Kingdom.

The day before, gas explosions in the Yuanhua Coal Mine in Jixi, in the northeastern province of Heilongjiang, killed 21 miners, leaving six workers missing. The same day, a blast at a privately owned mine in Fuyuan, Yunnan province, killed 32 workers and injured 28.

Nearly 6,000 coal miners died on the job in 2005, and the death toll for the first 10 months of 2006 was 3,726, as the Chinese government continued expanding coal production.

On November 29 a court jailed two mine managers for negligence in a 2004 gas explosion that killed 166 miners at the Chenjiasan mine in central China. They were given jail terms of five to five-and-a-half years. The same day an appeals court upheld jail sentences of three to six years for five mine managers and technicians held responsible in a gas blast that killed 83 coal miners in 2005.

Three weeks before the latest explosions, four journalists who worked for the Beijing-based magazine *Guancha Zhoukan* were arrested in Linfen, Shanxi, for conducting "illegal interviews" about the Luweitan mine, according to the Hong Kong paper *South China Morning Post.*

Meanwhile, in Shanxi, four Communist Party officials lost their party seniority after 65 people died in three mine accidents.

—Brian Williams

New Jersey state workers rally against health, pension cuts

Thousands of New Jersey state employees held rallies November 30 against proposals before the state legislature to cut public workers' retirement and health benefits. The lunchtime demonstrations, organized by the Communications Workers of America, took place at dozens of state office buildings across New Jersey. In Trenton, more than 200 workers took to the streets at three state office buildings, the *Star-Ledger* reported.

The unionists were protesting recommendations from a legislative committee that would raise the retirement age from 60 to 62 years, add co-payments for health insurance, and roll back pension benefits by about 9 percent for new employees. Capitalist politicians have presented these cutbacks as part of a plan necessary for reducing property taxes. Unions are organizing a larger statewide protest December 11 in Trenton.

—Brian Williams

Engineers union members picket port of Los Angeles

Members of the Engineers and Architects Association (EAA) picketed the port of Los Angeles November 29–30, slowing work at two shipping terminals. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa immediately asked the city attorney's office to seek a temporary restraining order to block the strike action. Los Angeles Superior Court judge David Yaffe rejected this request, however.

The unionists are demanding a 15 percent pay raise in a new five-year contract. Teamster truck drivers refused to cross the EAA's two-day picket line, preventing a Norwegian Star cruise ship from stocking up on provisions. Port pilots honored the union's pickets as well, refusing to bring shipments into certain terminals. Protest picket actions will continue at various unannounced locations until this dispute is settled, said EAA president Bob Aquino.

—Brian Williams

Record 7 million jailed, on parole or probation

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A record 7 million people in the United States—one in every 32 adults—were incarcerated, on probation, or on parole as of the end of 2005, according to an annual Justice Department report released November 29.

Some 2.2 million people were locked up in federal and state prisons or local jails, an increase of nearly 3 percent over last year. Another 4.1 million were on probation and nearly 800,000 on parole. The United States has 5 percent of the world's population but 22 percent of the world's prisoners, according to a 2003 report by the Prison Policy Initiative.

While the numbers locked up jumped sharply under the Clinton administration, the prison population has continued to increase since then. The total number of people incarcerated rose 35 percent from 1995 to 2005, the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

Of those behind bars in 2005, about 40 percent were Black and 20 percent Latino. Blacks comprise 12.3 percent of the U.S. population as a whole; Latinos, 12.5 percent. Some 8.1 percent of Black males aged 25 to 29 —about one in 13—are behind bars, compared with 1.1 percent of white males in that age group.

The number of women in jail rose 2.6 percent last year, with women now accounting for 7 percent of all inmates in federal and state prisons.

Individuals sentenced for drug law violations accounted for 55 percent of the prison population in 2003. Those jailed on immigration charges rose nearly 400 percent from 1995 to 2003, accounting for 10 percent of federal inmates, the Bloomberg news agency reported.

Anti-immigrant forces set back in New Jersey town

BY ELLEN BERMAN AND JOHN STUDER

RIVERSIDE, New Jersey—This small town north of Philadelphia received a great deal of notoriety last summer when the township council, led by Mayor Charles Hilton, unanimously passed an anti-immigrant ordinance similar to the one adopted in Hazleton, Pennsylvania. The ordinance levied sanctions against employers who hire undocumented workers and said anyone who "knowingly allows an illegal alien to use, rent, or lease their property shall be in violation and will be fined no less than $1,000."

Immigrant workers in this town, estimated to number 2,000 to 3,000, mostly Brazilian and Ecuadorian—out of a population of 8,000—were scapegoated by local officials, who demagogically talked about driving them out of town as they campaigned for office.

In November, however, township voters overwhelmingly rejected those policies and threw Hilton and his running mate out of office. "There was an amazing turnout," Ed Robins, a music store owner on the town's main street, said in an interview. "This was a big statement from the 'silent majority,' the ones that didn't come to the protests."

Passage of the ordinance was met with a public protest in August by 300 supporters of immigrants' rights and an aggressive countermobilization of 400 rightists carrying U.S. and Confederate flags, chanting "U.S.A." and "Scram!"

In the months since the ordinance was adopted, township council meetings became a mobilizing center for hundreds of vocal rightists and other opponents of immigrants rights, where speakers against implementation of the ordinance were shouted down and told to leave town.

"I grew up in the 1950s and '60s, and I remember the smashing of the Jim Crow laws," Robins said. "That's why I was doing what I could to help the immigrants get their rights."

"After the law was passed, we lost 40 percent of our business," said Everaldo Souza, a Brazilian-born worker at the King Chicken restaurant. "Now people who left are coming back, and this gives more confidence to the people here."

While some workers who had left Riverside fearing harassment after passage of the ordinance and the racist mobilizations have returned, the ordinance is still on the books. The township has revised the ordinance and is not currently enforcing the act's provisions.

The ordinance faces two legal challenges, one brought by the National Coalition of Latino Clergy and Christian Leaders, and the other by the Riverside Coalition of Business Owners and Landlords, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

25 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

December 18, 1981

President Reagan, who campaigned on a promise to "get the government off the backs of the people," has granted the political police expanded powers to spy on us and disrupt our lives. On December 4, Reagan signed an executive order replacing an earlier version issued by President Carter in January, 1978.

Reagan declared that "an approach that emphasizes suspicion and mistrust of our own intelligence efforts can undermine this nation's ability to confront the increasing challenge of espionage and terrorism."

The new executive order drops some of the very mild limits that the Carter order had publicly imposed on the activities of the secret police. However, the real guidelines and procedures governing the FBI and CIA have been and remain classified information.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

December 17, 1956

The third all-out attempt of the Kremlin to smash the Hungarian Revolution has failed of its primary objective—prevention of the 48-hour general strike called by the Budapest Workers Council for Dec. 11 and 12. The strike was a resounding success, more complete than any previous strike in Hungarian history. Flying squadrons of pickets, boldly operating one step ahead of Soviet troops and the reconstituted police of the puppet Kadar regime, even closed stores, government agencies and stopped streetcars and buses that were operating with military escorts.

The strike was called for 48 hours but has already lasted longer, since tens of thousands of workers jumped the gun and shut down Budapest's industries early on Dec. 10 rather than wait for the midnight deadline. Now the big question is how and when the strike will end.

THE MILITANT
Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

December 19, 1931

The verdict of guilty in the case of William B. Jones, Harlan County miners' leader, with the accompanying sentence of life imprisonment, again brings this historic struggle sharply before the working class and warns against any further delay in organizing a genuine national movement in behalf of the indicted men. More than a score of workers are yet to be tried. Their lives are in danger, and with them the life of the organized labor movement in the Kentucky mine fields. The intervention of a powerful workers' protest in the affair is one of the most important questions of the day. Here is a case of vindictive persecution, not of a few individuals merely but on a wholesale scale. The object is to wipe out unionism and terrorize all of its advocates by a fearful example of class "justice" and revenge. Can that be allowed to happen in comparative silence?

NATO to expand role in Afghanistan war, offers Serbia partnership status

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—At a November 28–29 NATO summit meeting in Riga, Latvia, the U.S. government took another step in involving the imperialist alliance's troops in the war in Afghanistan. A compromise agreement allows troops from Italy, Germany, France, and Spain to be deployed, on an "emergency" basis, in southern Afghanistan, where they had not been used previously.

NATO forces in that region—mostly U.S., British, Canadian, and Dutch troops—have engaged in sharp clashes with supporters of the former Taliban regime, particularly in recent months.

At the meeting, NATO powers also agreed to offer Serbia partnership status—a step toward full membership—along with Bosnia and Montenegro. The three areas are part of former Yugoslavia. Washington hopes the offer will smooth the way for a compromise on the status of the Serbian province of Kosova, a majority-Albanian region that has been occupied by NATO troops since 1999.

In July NATO took over command from Washington of combat operations in southern Afghanistan. The 32,000 NATO troops in that country, however, have been operating under geographical and operational limits set by member governments. At the Riga summit Washington and London sought to win agreement to lift all these restraints.

In the end, NATO officials agreed to eliminate a number of restrictions to ease the movement of troops and equipment across different parts of Afghanistan.

NATO secretary-general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said he had commitments from leaders of all 26 NATO members that the remaining restrictions would be waived in emergency cases. He said an emergency would be defined by the commander of the NATO force.

In response, Spain's prime minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, countered that his government would not yet lift any of the restrictions and that emergency use of its troops would be decided by the Spanish command. Italian prime minister Romano Prodi said Rome, Paris, and Berlin were taking the same stance. French president Jacques Chirac said his government would consider sending its troops outside Kabul case by case.

"But NATO officials said that the political signal sent by the leaders at the summit would make it near impossible for national capitals in the future to resist emergency calls by commanders in the field," the *Financial Times* reported November 30.

Washington also made progress in further integrating NATO into its broader "global war on terror." Despite earlier reluctance by some imperialist governments to project NATO military interventions in other parts of the world, the military alliance issued a "comprehensive political guidance" document at the Riga summit stating that NATO may have to take future action against "terrorism" and "the spread of weapons of mass destruction" around the world in the coming years.

Serbian 'partnership' in NATO

The NATO summit also agreed to begin talks with the Serbian government on granting it partnership status. Until now, U.S. and NATO officials had blocked admission of Belgrade because of its refusal to meet their demands that it turn over two former Bosnian Serb chauvinist leaders, Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, whom an imperialist tribunal in The Hague has charged with "war crimes."

The move on Serbia's role in NATO is part of the imperialist efforts to gain more influence in the Balkans. In 1999 U.S. and other NATO forces waged a 78-day bombing campaign against Yugoslavia, posing as defenders of ethnic Albanians in the Serbian province of Kosova who were under attack by Serbian chauvinist forces backed by Belgrade. Kosova was then put under United Nations control, enforced by 50,000 troops, mostly under NATO command.

The UN Security Council is expected to decide on the status of Kosova in the coming months. Albanians in that region have continued to demand independence.



AP/David Guttenfelder

Canadian and Afghani troops return from patrol November 23 in Kandahar, Afghanistan. At summit, NATO powers took steps to expand their military role in southern Afghanistan.

Serbian president Boris Tadic has advocated some form of autonomy for Kosova, while the country's foreign minister, Vuk Draskovic, recently called for a compromise "between respecting Serbia's territorial integrity and accommodating the demands by Kosovo's ethnic Albanians for full independence," the Associated Press reported December 2.

Tadic and Draskovic have sought closer ties to NATO after years of isolation imposed on Serbia by the imperialist powers. In the campaign for the January 21 parliamentary elections in Serbia, right-wing chauvinist parties have vowed to resist any concessions on Kosova's status.

The debate over Kosova has heightened tensions with the Russian government of President Vladimir Putin. Moscow, which has sought to maintain its close ties with Belgrade, has warned that any change in Kosova's status could set a precedent for pro-Russian regions in Moldova, Georgia, and elsewhere to pursue their independence, the *International Herald Tribune* reported.

U.S. rulers debate how to prosecute war in Iraq; troop withdrawal not an option

Continued from front page

in U.S. ruling-class circles over how best to accomplish its goal of establishing a stable client regime in Iraq as the conflict between bourgeois factions competing for power has become more bloody in recent months.

The Iraq Study Group, a bipartisan commission headed by Republican former secretary of state James Baker and Democratic former congressman Lee Hamilton, released its report today with recommendations on redeploying U.S. troops and how to reinforce the Iraqi government's forces.

The number of Iraqi civilians killed in the factional fighting reached a record monthly high in October with 3,709 deaths, according to a United Nations agency. The UN report also estimated that more than 400,000 civilians have been displaced from their homes since the February bombing of a Shiite mosque in the city of Samara.

The replacement of Rumsfeld has been widely touted by many capitalist politicians and much of the media as a signal of a change in course on Iraq by the Bush administration. As Gates put it in his confirmation hearings, however, "Whatever changed approach or strategy we come up with…we are still going to have to have some level of American support there for the Iraqi military and that could take quite some time."

Bush met November 30 in Amman with Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki. "I know there's a lot of speculation that these reports in Washington mean there's going to be some kind of graceful exit out of Iraq," Bush said at a news conference following the meeting, referring to press accounts about the study group's proposals. "We're going to stay in Iraq to get the job done."

The framework of the ruling-class debate on the conduct of the Mideast war was summarized in a front-page news analysis in the December 1 *New York Times* titled "Idea of Rapid Withdrawal from Iraq Seems to Fade." It began, "In the cacophony of competing plans about how to deal with Iraq, one reality now appears clear: despite the Democrats' victory this month in an election viewed as a referendum on the war, the idea of a rapid American troop withdrawal is fast receding as a viable option."

According to press reports, the study group's proposal calls for a pullback of the 15 U.S. brigades in Iraq. These troops could then be redeployed to U.S. bases in Iraq or in neighboring countries, capable of being rapidly sent back into war zones. It would still leave at least 70,000 U.S. troops in Iraq "for a long time to come," the *Times* noted.

A strategy review drafted by the Pentagon could add another 20,000–30,000 U.S. troops to the 140,000 currently in Iraq in order to focus on accelerated training of Iraqi security forces, the *Washington Post* reported.

The study group's proposal urges the Bush administration to engage the governments of Iran and Syria in helping to stabilize Iraq. Asked by reporters in Amman if he would deal with Iran, Bush reiterated Washington's charges that the Iranian government was intervening in Lebanon and Iraq and that the U.S. government would continue to demand that Iran give up its pursuit of nuclear weapons.

Tit-for-tat suicide bombings and killings of civilians have continued to escalate in Iraq since the February bombing of the Shiite mosque. They have been carried out by militias loyal to one or the other of contending capitalist factions vying for control in the Iraqi government. The bulk of those killed or displaced have been working people—Sunni and Shiite.

Scotland: bosses agree to talk after knitwear workers' strikes

BY PETER CLIFFORD

COATBRIDGE, Scotland—After 18 days of strike action over a 10-week period, 110 knitwear workers at Mackinnon Mill here have forced the company to negotiate. The workers, members of the Community trade union, began holding weekly two-day strikes September 28 after the company said it was imposing a pay freeze. Mackinnon is a subsidiary of clothing manufacturer Edinburgh Woollen Mills.

On the eve of an all-out strike, the company backed off its refusal to discuss a wage raise November 29 and set a meeting with the union for December 9. The company also agreed to a one-time payment to workers before Christmas.

"We're looking for a short-term fix to the issue," knitwear machine operator John Clark said in an interview. "If the talks don't go well, then the company knows we'll ballot again for action."

While the strike action is suspended, workers have decided to maintain an overtime ban until they win a settlement. In addition to stopping production, the strikers' effective picketing impacted sales at an Edinburgh Woollen Mills retail outlet at the plant site. In October, the bosses failed to get a court to stop the picketing in front of the store. They also backed away from moves to discipline four workers for allegedly intimidating the six individuals who crossed the picket line.

"We've got a stronger union through all of this," said Clark.

S.F. Chinatown book event

Continued from front page
the weight and importance of the contributions of Chinese-Cubans, which, they stressed, are often little-known.

"We don't know exactly how many Chinese people there are in Cuba," Wong said, citing the history of intermarriage and integration of Chinese into Cuban society. He explained why so many Chinese emigrated in the 19th and 20th centuries and the interconnections between Chinese communities in different parts of the Americas.

Wong described three waves of Chinese immigration to Cuba, which began in 1847 with thousands of indentured laborers brought by the Spanish colonialists to work the sugar plantations in slave-like conditions. From 1860 to about 1875, more came from the United States, mostly from California, fleeing racist attacks and discriminatory laws. A third wave came from China after 1911 amid the political upheaval, war, and civil war that culminated in the 1949 Chinese Revolution. Among those who arrived in Cuba in the post-World War II years, a good many joined the exodus of wealthy Cuban business people who went to the United States after the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959.

When he visited Cuba in 1999, Wong said, he talked with a number of Chinese-Cubans who had emigrated to Miami and later returned. When asked why, some cited the discrimination and loneliness they had felt, as well as the free health care in Cuba and homes for the elderly that were better than they could afford in the United States.

On display at the meeting were photos and a scrapbook brought by panelist James Hirabayashi from the Caribbean Festival in Santiago. The display included photos of noted Chinese-Cuban painter and historian Pedro Eng, whom Hirabayashi visited during his trip.

Hirabayashi said he met the president of the Japanese-Cuban Association in Cuba, who told him that Japanese do not suffer racism there today. "Because of the racism we suffered during World War II as Japanese Americans, I'm very sensitive to these kind of things," Hirabayashi said. "I spent some time in a concentration camp." He described how Japanese men in Cuba had also been imprisoned during the war.

Hirabayashi participated in the 1969 Third World student strike at San Francisco State University, which united Asians, Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, and other students in a fight for an Ethnic Studies Department. When that fight was won, he became the first full-time dean of an Ethnic Studies program in the United States, a responsibility from which he retired only recently.

The meeting began with a slide presentation, narrated by Milton Chee, of photos from *Our History Is Still Being Written* highlighting the contributions of the three authors—Armando Choy, Moisés Sío Wong, and Gustavo Chui—and the historic events they were part of. All three, Chee noted, have shouldered leadership responsibilities from the time of their involvement in the 1959 Cuban Revolution to today.

One slide showed a Havana beach that was for "whites only" before the revolution. "With the victory of the revolution, beaches as well as schools, clinics, and other public facilities were integrated, discrimination in hiring was outlawed, and the fight against racism in all other areas began," Chee said.

Felicia Lowe, who had spoken at a September 9 presentation of the book hosted here by the Chinese Historical Society of America, showed video footage of interviews with Chinese-Cubans from her forthcoming documentary, *Chinese Couplet: El Barrio Chino and My Mother's Names.*

Lowe told of her own family's experience with racist U.S. laws, including the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which blocked immigration from China until its repeal in 1943. One of Lowe's films, *Carved in Silence*, is the story of Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, where from 1910 to 1940 arriving Chinese immigrants were imprisoned and interrogated as part of enforcing the infamous exclusion act.

Lowe's documentary describes recent efforts by Chinese in Cuba to retain their culture and revitalize Havana's Chinatown. "The mixed-blood Chinese—because there are very few pure Chinese now—who are taking Mandarin classes, who are learning to read and write and speak Chinese, and who are learning martial arts are very interested in asserting their Chinese cultural identity," she said. "I found that to be an interesting dynamic—that despite the ideals of socialism, there is still part of each of us that wants to claim we're something special."

Mary-Alice Waters, who interviewed the three generals featured in *Our History Is Still Being Written*, had just returned from Caracas, Venezuela, where she had spoken at a panel presentation on the title as part of the Venezuela International Book Fair. A young Chinese-Venezuelan woman who also spoke, Waters noted, had described the racist abuse suffered today by Venezuelans of Asian descent.





Militant photos by Ellen Haywood

Speakers at December 2 meeting held at public library in San Francisco's Chinatown. Above, from right, filmmaker Felicia Lowe (speaking), Pathfinder Press president Mary-Alice Waters, professor Bernard Wong of San Francisco State University, and James Hirabayashi of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles. Inset, Hirabayashi at podium, and librarian Sally Wong, who chaired the event.

"The social and economic status of Asians in Cuba is different from anywhere in the Western Hemisphere," Waters pointed out. She said that at the 1999 conference on the Chinese diaspora, Gen. Sío Wong was asked, "How is it possible that you, a descendent of Chinese, occupy a high government post, are a deputy of the national assembly, a general in the armed forces?"

Sío Wong's answer was, "Here we had a socialist revolution, a revolution that eliminated discrimination based on the color of a person's skin, that eliminated the property relations that create not only economic but social inequality between rich and poor. Here the discrimination against Blacks, against Chinese, against women, against the poor was ended. The Chinese community here in Cuba is different from that in Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Canada, and elsewhere. And the difference is a socialist revolution."

"That is the reality you see when you go to Cuba today," Waters said—the integration of Cubans of Chinese descent into every aspect of life in Cuba. "What Felicia was referring to, the pride with which they assert their Chinese heritage and want very much to preserve it, is real. Total integration and the absence of discrimination goes hand in hand with the assertion of pride in who they are, their individuality. And that, I would say, is at the very heart of a real socialist revolution."

In the discussion period, Gladys Chaw, who had also participated in the 1999 Havana conference, was one of the first speakers. "For those who want to look at an endangered species," she said, "I'm a Chinese-Cuban, a '*chino natural*,' as they say in Cuba, because both my parents were Chinese." Chaw, who came to the United States with her family in 1962 when she was 10 years old, joked that people are always telling her "you don't look Cuban."

"I congratulate you on this book," she said. "I was really very happy to see something from a different perspective about what Chinese-Cubans are doing in Cuba. Because in my research, I haven't found anything like this. That doesn't mean I agree with everything they [the Cuban generals] say. After all, I'm here not in Cuba."

Chaw noted that she was critical of the way Chinatown in Havana was being revitalized. "It's too gaudy and touristy. It's too stereotyped," she said.

The panelists were also asked about sexism and about prejudiced attitudes by some people in Cuba against people with darker skin color.

Waters noted that the Cuban Revolution "has made it possible for women to play an economic and social role, to have a place in society that is qualitatively different from before. The attitudes on relations between men and women have changed dramatically. But they haven't changed as much as the attitudes on race have.

"The legacy of centuries of racism does not get eliminated overnight," Waters said, "and you still find many elements of it today. But what has changed, what has been eliminated, is the entire social and economic foundation. And that, more than anything else, is what is reflected in the integration of Chinese in Cuba today.

"As Gladys said, there are very few pure Chinese left in Cuba today. The overwhelming majority of those of Chinese ancestry—hundreds of thousands—are deeply proud of their Chinese ancestry, that they are representative of the Cuban nation: of the strands of history that came together in the forging of the Cuban nation, including the slaves from Africa, the indentured laborers from China, the immigration from Europe."

The Cuban nation, Waters said, "was forged through the revolutionary struggle for independence from Spain, intertwined with the fight to abolish slavery and indentured labor, and then the successful fight for independence from imperialist domination that was opened by the revolutionary victory of 1959."

The following day, the widely read Chinese-language daily *Sing Tao* carried a substantial article on the event, with large, color photos of the book and of the meeting.

Capitalist exploitation cannot be reformed away



Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht (center) attending the German Social Democratic Party congress held in Leipzig, Germany, in 1909.

Below is an excerpt from Reform or Revolution *by Rosa Luxemburg, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in December. At the turn of the 20th century Luxemburg led the fight in the German Social Democratic Party against attempts to revise fundamental tenets of Marxism by Eduard Bernstein, one of Marx and Engels's literary executors and a respected leader of Social Democracy. In* Reform or Revolution *Luxemburg explains why capitalism cannot*

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

overcome its internal contradictions and crises—a view still hotly debated today. Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY ROSA LUXEMBURG

At first view the title of this work may be found surprising. Can the social democracy be against reforms? Can we counterpose the social revolution, the transformation of the existing order, our final goal, to social reforms? Certainly not. The daily struggle for reforms, for the amelioration of the condition of the workers within the framework of the existing social order, and for democratic institutions, offers to the social democracy the only means of engaging in the proletarian class war and working in the direction of the final goal—the conquest of political power and the suppression of wage labor. Between social reforms and revolution there exists for the social democracy an indissoluble tie. The struggle for reforms is its means; the social revolution, its aim.

It is in Eduard Bernstein's theory, presented in his articles on "Problems of Socialism," *Neue Zeit* of 1897–98, and in his book *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie* [The Preconditions of Socialism and the Tasks of Social Democracy—in English published under the title *Evolutionary Socialism*—Ed.] that we find for the first time, the opposition of the two factors of the labor movement. His theory tends to counsel us to renounce the social transformation, the final goal of the social democracy and, inversely, to make of social reforms, the means of the class struggle, its aim….

But since the final goal of socialism constitutes the only decisive factor distinguishing the social democratic movement from bourgeois democracy and from bourgeois radicalism, the only factor transforming the entire labor movement from a vain effort to repair the capitalist order into a class struggle against this order, for the suppression of this order—the question: "Reform or revolution?" as it is posed by Bernstein, equals for social democracy the question: "To be or not to be?"….

To expect an opposition against scientific socialism at its very beginning, to express itself clearly, fully, and to the last consequence on the subject of its real content; to expect it to deny openly and bluntly the theoretic basis of the social democracy—would amount to underrating the power of scientific socialism. Today he who wants to pass as a socialist, and at the same time would declare war on Marxian doctrine, the most stupendous product of the human mind in the century, must begin with involuntary esteem for Marx. He must begin by acknowledging himself to be his disciple, by seeking in Marx's own teachings the points of support for an attack on the latter, while he represents this attack as a further development of Marxian doctrine. On this account, we must, unconcerned by its outer forms, pick out the sheathed kernel of Bernstein's theory. This is a matter of urgent necessity for the broad layers of the industrial proletariat in our party.

No coarser insult, no baser aspersion, can be thrown against the workers than the remark: "Theoretic controversies are only for academicians." Some time ago Lassalle said: "Only when science and the workers, these opposite poles of society, become one, will they crush in their arms of steel all obstacles to culture." The entire strength of the modern labor movement rests on theoretic knowledge.

But doubly important is this knowledge for the workers in the present case, because it is precisely they and their influence in the labor movement that are in the balance here. It is their skin that is being brought to market. The opportunist theory in the party, the theory formulated by Bernstein, is nothing else than an unconscious attempt to assure predominance to the petty bourgeois elements that have entered our party, to change the policy and aims of our party in their direction. The question of reform and revolution, of the final goal and the movement, is basically, in another form, but the question of the petty bourgeois or proletarian character of the labor movement.

It is, therefore, in the interest of the proletarian mass of the party to become acquainted, actively and in detail, with the present theoretic controversy with opportunism. As long as theoretic knowledge remains the privilege of a handful of "academicians" in the party, the latter will face the danger of going astray. Only when the great mass of workers take the keen and dependable weapons of scientific socialism in their own hands will all the petty bourgeois inclinations, all the opportunist currents, come to naught. The movement will then find itself on sure and firm ground. "Quantity will do it."

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EDITORIAL

U.S. out of Iraq, Afghanistan now!

The near-unanimous confirmation by the U.S. Senate of Robert Gates as the new secretary of defense shows once again that working people have nothing to celebrate from the victory of the Democrats in last month's congressional elections.

Drawing bipartisan praise, the former CIA chief acknowledged that "there are no new ideas" on Iraq and U.S. troops will need to stay there for years to come. The bipartisan proposals of the Iraq Study Group, have been falsely publicized as a "phased withdrawal" of U.S. troops. In fact, they would mean no more than a gradual redeployment of half of the U.S. soldiers occupying the country to bases in and around Iraq, from which they could quickly be sent back to theaters of war.

Incoming Senate majority leader Harry Reid has said the newly elected Democratic majority will push for a $75 billion increase in the military budget to expand the U.S. military's capacity to fight more effectively around the world—from Iraq to Afghanistan and beyond.

There are no alternatives proposed by Democrats or Republicans to the U.S. military strategy and order of battle crafted under the Bush administration by the president and his staff, including Gates's predecessor Donald Rumsfeld.

The U.S. capitalist ruling class, under the banner of "fighting terrorism," is leading the imperialist powers of the world in a "long war." Its real aim is to break the resistance by working people and any government that doesn't bow to Washington's dictates.

The crisis driving the imperialist rulers is not conjunctural. It was not triggered by a single event like 9/11. It is not the result of the specific policies of one or another president or Congress. It is rooted in the long-term economic downturn that began some three decades ago with the exhaustion of the economic boom that grew out of preparations for World War II. What is unfolding now is the acceleration of that crisis in all its facets, including the sharpening conflicts among the imperialist powers born of competition over dividing the world's markets and resources.

U.S. foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy. The same capitalist families pressing wars abroad are backing the bosses' attacks at home on wages, job conditions, and democratic rights. The same billionaires and their pursuit of their profit interests are behind the rampant police racism and brutality.

Working people everywhere, such as the millions who this year took to the streets and walked off the job to demand the legalization of undocumented immigrants—actions that are precursors of working-class struggles to come—have no interest in backing the U.S. rulers' foreign or domestic policies.

We should demand: "U.S. troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan now!"

N.Y. marchers protest killing by cops

Continued from front page

precinct and then to Mary Immaculate Hospital, where Guzman and Benefield were recuperating.

"The police need to be in prison. We need to continue our rallies and protests," said Jasmine Gray, a senior at Brandeis High School, in an interview.

"A friend asked me why I came, since I'm not Black," said protester Ana Sánchez. "But I said we have to work together. This could have happened to my son."

At the rally Malik Zulu Shabazz, a lawyer and head of the New Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, which called the action, advocated a 50-day boycott of businesses not owned by Blacks.

Seeking to justify the killing, police have since claimed the existence of a "fourth man" who was armed and at the scene of the shooting. They also insist that the undercover cop who fired first had identified himself. Several witnesses interviewed December 3 by assistant district attorneys, however, refuted the cops' claims, Charlie King, an attorney for five witnesses, told the Associated Press.

Under the pretext of searching for a "fourth man," police raided several homes November 29–30 in working-class neighborhoods in the Bronx and in Jamaica, Queens. At least six people were arrested, all on minor charges unrelated to the incident.

One of the men picked up, Eric Kellam, 29, said the police burst into his Bronx apartment and broke his nose. "They were screaming, 'Where's the f___ gun!'" He replied, "What are you talking about? What gun?" Kellam, who does not know any of the men involved in the incident, was not charged with any crime.

Also picked up was Jean Nelson, a witness at the scene who was initially branded by cops as the "fourth man" but later released. King, Nelson's attorney, accused the police of "witness intimidation."

Some 10 days after the attack, anonymous "law enforcement sources" tried to implicate Bell, Benefield, and Guzman in a drug-running scheme, telling the *New York Daily News* that a police informer bought crack cocaine from Bell in August, the paper reported December 5.

"This is another indication that the New York City Police Department is not investigating any wrongdoing by the officers at the scene but are interested in…creating cover and motivation to justify the officers' actions and dirty the name of a dead man," said Michael Hardy, the attorney for Guzman, Benefield, and Nicole Paultre, Bell's fiancée.

The two survivors of the attack have also refuted the police allegations. Interviewed in the hospital about whether the plainclothes cops who killed Bell had identified himself, Guzman emphatically said, "Never!" the *Daily News* reported December 5.

"No fourth man," said Benefield as he sat in a wheelchair before his release from the hospital, the paper reported the next day. "One of my friends is dead," he added. "We need justice."

Meanwhile, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has insisted on waiting for a "fair investigation." Other big-business politicians have demanded the resignation of police commissioner Raymond Kelly. Some groups, like the New York Civil Liberties Union, called on the city council to form an "independent board" and recommend reforms in police training. Appearing December 4 on CNN's *Larry King Live* program, Democratic Party politician Al Sharpton, who has spoken at several protests against the police killing, said, "I think that most people that question police conduct are not questioning police. We need police."

At tonight's rally, after calling repeatedly for Kelly's resignation, Barron received applause when he said, "The cops who did this should rot in jail, and then after they die they should rot in hell."

"They're going to walk, unless the pressure from these marches gets to be too much," said protester Samantha Hebbert in an interview. "This is happening everywhere. We need to band together."

More protest actions have been called, including a December 16 march down Manhattan's Fifth Avenue.

Olympia Newton contributed to this article.

LETTERS

Question on workers states

I'm writing to ask you to clarify an important political question. For many years Marxists referred to the Soviet Union and its allies as "workers states." The regimes, of course, were overthrown a few years ago, but it's pretty clear that capitalism has not been restored, at least not completely, and it's also interesting that many of the former "Communist" parties have won elections in countries like Bulgaria, Poland, and elsewhere.

So my questions is—are these countries still "workers states," or are they somewhere between workers states and capitalism? I know you've written about this in the past, but I haven't found much literature in recent years on this.

Tim Jones
Atlanta, Georgia

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Are former Soviet states capitalist?

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Tim Jones writes in a letter to the editor that "it's pretty clear that capitalism has not been restored, at least not completely," in countries such as Russia where socialist revolutions were successfully carried out in the past. He asks, "Are these countries still 'workers' states' or are they somewhere between workers states and capitalism?"

This question is addressed in *New International* no. 11, "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War." It describes the foundations of what socialists call a workers state as "state property, a monopoly on foreign trade, and economic planning, established through the

REPLY TO A READER

expropriation of the bourgeoisie." This is a transitional state along the long-term road to establishing socialism as part of the world struggle against imperialist and capitalist exploitation and oppression. As such, a workers state can go backward toward a capitalist one, but so far none have.

The workers state is not simply a block of nationalized property. It is fundamentally a set of social relations conquered by the working class in its struggle for state power. It will take another struggle—a counterrevolutionary war, in fact—to reverse such relations. That war has not yet been joined anywhere in the world, although it remains a key goal of the imperialist rulers.

Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky explained this in *The Revolution Betrayed*, describing why the Soviet Union remained a workers state despite the takeover of the government and party by a privileged bureaucratic caste led by Joseph Stalin. "As a conscious political force the bureaucracy has betrayed the revolution," Trotsky wrote. "But a victorious revolution is fortunately not only a program and a banner, not only political institutions, but also a system of social relations. To betray it is not enough. You have to overthrow it.

"The [Russian] revolution has been betrayed by the ruling stratum, but not yet overthrown. It has a great power of resistance, coinciding with the established property relations, with the living force of the proletariat, the consciousness of its best elements, the impasse of world capitalism, and the inevitability of world revolution."

Today, proletarian property forms continue to dominate industry and agriculture in Russia and other workers states including in Eastern Europe. A 1998 report by the pro-imperialist Freedom House found that 95 percent of state and collective farms in Russia "are largely unreformed," meaning the land has not been privatized. That situation has not changed much since then. And while a substantial amount of industry has been turned over to private owners, the core of industry remains nationalized.

The strike in October by 24,000 coal miners in Kazakhstan, formerly part of the Soviet Union, shows why many foreign capitalist firms are reluctant to pour money into the workers states. The miners walked off the job after a blast killed 41 miners at the Lenin mine owned by Dutch-based steel giant Mittal. They only returned when Mittal promised to double their wages and improve mine equipment.

The socialist consciousness Trotsky refers to no longer exists in the bureaucratized workers states. Decades of Stalinist miseducation and repression destroyed that. That explains the fact that today Stalinist parties in those countries are sometimes voted into office despite their anti-working-class politics.

What does exist in these countries is a trade union consciousness and the assumption by the working class of the right to a historically defined minimal social wage. These remain the first great obstacle that will lead to massive struggles in the workers states against the reimposition of capitalism.

One of the most important gains from the collapse of Stalinist governments and parties in the former Soviet bloc countries is that the myth that these counterrevolutionary gangs represented Marxism has been shattered. They are no longer able to derail revolutionary anti-imperialist and anticapitalist struggles in the way they did previously. That bodes well for the development, over time, of a new working-class leadership on a world scale, including in the bureaucratized workers states.